

**From:** John Bintz  
**To:** Microsoft ATR  
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**Subject:** Microsoft Settlement

I think the two most important parts of this settlement are the IE bundling with Windows to kill Netscape and the inability for OEMs to allow dual-booting PCs. For the longest time, Netscape had the much superior product to Microsoft, but once IE became bundled with Windows, and the only way to get an alternative browser was to download a several megabyte file over a phone line connection, most average users say, "What's the point? I've got the 'e' here. I'll just use that." The average user balks at both file downloading and program installation.

It's no wonder Netscape holds so little market share right now, and what is left is slowly eroding away (my work's Web traffic logs indicate that 80% of external traffic right now is IE, 15% is Netscape).

The dual boot restriction on OEM PCs also killed the Be software company and their competing operating system BeOS. BeOS was a very powerful, Unix/Amiga-like platform built from the ground up to be the ultimate media processing foundation. Hitachi wanted to make a dual boot Windows/BeOS machine, but because of OEM restrictions, users of the Hitachi FLORA had to go through numerous steps to enable the BeOS part of the hard drive

([http://www.google.com/search?q=cache:jwfwI2i84xUC:www-classic.be.com/support/guides/hitachi\\_boot.html+&hl=en](http://www.google.com/search?q=cache:jwfwI2i84xUC:www-classic.be.com/support/guides/hitachi_boot.html+&hl=en)

from Google's cache because Be's Web site is down for good). No normal user could be expected to follow all these steps just to enable an alternative operating system. Their response? "But it goes to Windows just fine! Why do I need this Bee-thingy, anyway?"

Microsoft's inability to give the users control is what makes them dangerous. If I want, I should be able to uninstall IE and put a competing browser in there to replace it. Had Microsoft opened up all of the programming interfaces to the operating system, a competing browser (such as Netscape or its offshoot Mozilla, which is what I'm using right now) could seamlessly replace Internet Explorer and everyone would be happy. Had Microsoft allowed OEMs to give visible dual-booting options, companies like Dell wouldn't have to produce two different lines of computers, one with Linux preinstalled and one with Windows installed (and Be might still be around). You could get a quad-booting Windows/Linux/FreeBSD/BeOS machine if you wished, and consumers would be happy.

However, Microsoft is really taking advantage of the beginning and non-power computer users with their very sneaky tactics. Try explaining to a beginner that the 'e' and the 'n' do the same thing, but that the 'n' is better. "Why is it better? The 'e' came with the computer!" Or try explaining that there's different OSes out there than Windows and

you can use two different ones on your computer. "What, like those eyeMac thingies? My friend has one, and her Word is all different. I told her to get a Gateway, and now her Word looks right." It's the non-power users who are hurt most by this, because Microsoft's practices limit their exposure to anything non-Microsoft in any way they can.

Thank you.